

The Sustainable Development Goals: An opportunity for the persons with disabilities

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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goal- SDG is also known as transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development is set of 17 aspirations called global goals. The United Nations through 194 member states as well as global civil society took initiatives to endorse these goal which contained in paragraph 54 of UN Resolution A/RES/70/01 on 25th of September 2015. On 19 July 2014 the UN General Assembly open working group on sustainable Development Goal forwarded a proposal for the SDG to the assembly with containing 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 global indicators.

The UN Sectary General Ban Ki-Moon quoted that “There can no plan B, because there is no planet B”. Sustainable development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all forms and dimensions, combating inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent.

Sustainable management and utilization of 5 “p” has been adopted as fundamental principles. These Ps are called people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership considering its implications that challenging the current world. It estimated that sustainability of the people can be achieved through ending poverty and hunger in all forms of society by ensuring dignity and equality. As Mr. Moon quoted, there is no plan B because there is no planet B, it is also a measure to protect our planet, natural resource and climate for our future generations. Prosperity refer to ensure prosperous and dignified life in harmony with nature.

The SDG is also envisioned to foster peaceful, just and inclusive society considering current global crisis in terms of political, social and cultural issues. The SDG is not only motivating and dreamed the goals but also discerning about its well implementation through global partnership.

SDG and Disability

All goals are related to persons with disabilities, but only 7 targets have an explicit reference. A number of other Goals and targets reference vulnerable groups and thus include persons with disabilities because of the reference (vulnerable) in paragraph 23 of the SDG[\[1\]](#). This paragraph is particularly strong because it calls for the empowerment of ‘vulnerable’ people and places persons with disabilities at the center of poverty eradication throughout the entire Agenda

The inclusive phrasing of many Goals and targets, also make them implicitly applicable for persons with disabilities, such as those referencing “for all” or “all women and men.” Even without any such references, all Goals and targets will be applicable to persons with disabilities by simple virtue of the universality, which applies to all, and the overarching principle of “leave no one behind”

SDG has taken “Leaving no one behind” as overarching objective. Therefore, people with disabilities also should not be left behind in all its goals although disability is not mentioned in all SDG goals. SDG has emphasis on inclusive society as well as prosperity, sustainability of the development, reduce hunger and poverty, the persons with disabilities are come into front line. Without addressing poverty of people with disability the goal of zero hunger will not be achieved. To ensure its success, the agenda must remain of the people, by the people and for the people committing to world to global action for the next 15 years.

Sustainable development goal is a milestone to thrive the persons with disabilities in forms of development process. There are 17 goals among these 13 goals are reference to the person with disabilities and 7 have explicit reference to Person with disabilities. In summary of each of the goal that linked to persons with disabilities have been summarize.

Eradicating poverty:

Eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere and implement social protection systems. Achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable and ensure that the poor and the vulnerable have equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership (land, property, inheritance, natural resources), new technology, financial services, including microfinance. Nepal is underdeveloped country where more than 80 percent of population are living in rural area with semi-to unemployment situation.

A recent household survey of CBS Nepal shows that per capita GDP in current price is less than \$2 per day and only 77 percent of Nepal population is employed. To reduce poverty down in 6 percent is much ambitious and even more challenging in context of persons with disabilities. In this connection the development partners, government and civil society organization need to play a vital role in moving forward with decent idea in order to enforce disability inclusive development that should be incorporated in all level of development planning, implementation and monitoring & evaluation process.

Zero Hunger:

End hunger and ensure access for all people—in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations—to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round and end all forms of malnutrition. The goal can be achieved when and if food security is realized for persons with disabilities everywhere and available nutritious food. The World Food Summit 1996 states that food security “exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” A report stated that many persons with disabilities in most remote area are living their life depends on their relatives and in some cases they have not been treated well.

Nepal Health research report quoted that disability is also cause of lack of adequate nutritious food when they are in belly and after birth. Though it is challenging to ensure all persons with

disabilities have access to adequate food, but still the stakeholders to work very closely form different prospective. In order to ensure zero hunger, there is need of adequate food for all and to get food some sort of livelihood is required, thus it is essential to make sure that appropriate means of livelihood need to be designed and provided to persons with disabilities. The government should endorse disability friendly policy to adopt lasting and sustainable livelihood and employment opportunity.

Good health and wellbeing:

Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk, protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all are key assumption of SDG related to health and well-being. This agenda has also reference to the person with disabilities vocalize as access to universal health coverage and health care services is realized including for health costs related to disability. Disability is development issue but at the same time it's also connected to the medical and health issues.

A recent record published by one of the District Hospital said that out of 40 births, 8 cases have been reported with some kind of impairments and only 50 percent of them get live. This is because of poverty, lack of health awareness, unhygienic practice, hazardous work load, unhealthy practices during pregnancy. Especially during old age the poor people might not have easy and affordable access to the health care, medical treatment consequences long term disability. Thus the government and stakeholders make sure easy and affordable access to health facilities for all.

Quality and Inclusive education:

Complete free, equitable and quality education, access to quality early childhood development and access to affordable quality technical, vocational and literacy education are the key goals to be achieved by 2030. The goal can be achieved when inclusive, accessible and quality education for children and person with disabilities is realized in all level and leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. In the context of Nepal inclusive and accessible school infrastructure, inclusive teaching and learning environment, available of means of communication like sign language and braille, discriminatory behavior are seen as major hindrance to achieve this goal. A strong lobby, advocacy, planning and commitment including partnership is need to fight against of bad practiced noticed.

Gender Equality:

End all forms of discrimination against women and girls, eliminate all kinds of violence against of women, eliminate all forms of harmful practices like early marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse, ensure women's meaningful participation on all kinds of decision making process and leadership and ensure universal access to the reproductive health are the key assumption of goal. The goal can be achieved if all kinds of violence and discrimination towards girls and women with disabilities or towards children with disabilities ended and ensured that they are not excluded from society and treated equally. Nepal still practicing traditional norms and value thus general status of the women in Nepal is far lower than man.

Census 2011 shows that literacy rate of women is only 57 percent whereas male is 75 percent. Early marriage practices, traditional social customs and values and discriminatory

practices have remained them backwards. The women have limited access to justice, social and family discrimination between male and female, limited to no access to decision making level and mostly forced to be engaged on domestics works are key challenges. Strong mechanism, advocacy and lobby and result based programs and interventions required mainstream women in development.

Clean water and Sanitation:

Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all and access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene practices, end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. The goal can be achieve if equitable and accessible drinking water, sanitation practices and hygiene practices are provided to persons with disabilities. Inclusive infrastructure policies are not in practice in Nepal, thus different reports quoted that persons with disabilities are forced to have unhygienic practice because of lack of accessible WASH facilities.

Affordable and clean energy:

The goal is to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all. The goal can only be achieved if households with persons with disabilities have access with adequate energy to sufficient their daily life. Persons with disabilities are using different types of modern technology to increase their access to services, mobility, rights, information and communication. The affordable energy can support them to increase their access to various modern technologies and to make their daily activities easy by using different aids, appliances, equipment, devices, software and accessible IT system.

Decent Work and economic Growth-employment:

The vision of this goal is to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Further, it aims to promote development oriented policies that create employment, decent job opportunities, entrepreneurship and access to financial services. The goal can be achieved when there is expansion of anti-discriminatory provisions in labor and labor-related laws. Accessible workstations, non-discriminatory behaviors and realization for reasonable accommodation are the key pre-conditions to be fulfilled to reduce the barriers that hinder the access of persons with disabilities to the job market.

The other key factors to be considered are creating more inclusive mainstream initiatives to promote full and productive employment for persons with disabilities, inclusive and affordable access to training and vocational education program and access to bank loans and micro-finances to start the businesses.

Industry, Innovation and infrastructure:

The objective of this goal is to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. The goal can be achieved if the person with disabilities realize and have access to established enabling public policy environments to enhance possibilities for persons with disabilities. Ensure that built, transport and communications infrastructure and ICT are inclusive and accessible to persons with

disabilities and promote their full and equal inclusion into society through ICTs. In Nepal a very limited ICT has been introduced and even not reached in hands of those living in remote areas. It's essential to introduce the recent technology and make them available to the persons with disabilities of all over the country.

Reduced Inequalities:

The aim of this goal is to reduce inequalities within and among countries. Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all-irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. Eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action and adopt policies, especially financial, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality. The Goal can be achieved if Persons with disabilities participate equally in political activities and the national laws and policies are affordable and inclusive to them. By the law, all forms of discrimination to be eliminated and provide reasonable adjustment. Opportunities in social, cultural, economic and political arena to be provided to the persons with disabilities in inclusive and accessible manner and social protection and essential public services for persons with disabilities to be ensured.

Sustainable cities and communities:

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, reduce number of deaths caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities. The goal can be achieved when there is cities and human settlements are made livable, inclusive and accessible by applying the principles of universal design principles and international accessibility standards that can lead to a safer, more resilient world for all. Inclusive and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management programs should be given high priority in all level.

Climate Action (Change):

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters throughout the world. Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and Small Island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities. This goal is very important applying to the persons with disabilities as they considered most vulnerable during natural disaster and calamities. Thus the provision of food, water and shelter security for people with disabilities and their families to be ensured that persons with disabilities are front and center in seeking to create awareness, understanding and solutions. The evidence in Nepal earthquake reported that

persons with disabilities are affected double due to their inaccessibility, limited access and approach to relief material, WASH facilities and loss of their assistive devices.

Peace Justice and strong institutions:

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all level. Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere, end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture of children, women and person with disabilities, The goal is favoring to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The goal is considered more in favor of the persons with disabilities as it expanding rights to include in public services, are represented in key decision-making bodies and processes. Significant reduction of instances that persons with disabilities are subjected to violence and discrimination. All persons with disabilities must be registered at birth, end to forced sterilizations of persons with disabilities-Justices institutions are accessible and justice practices need to be affordable to them to protect and defend their rights. The justice system including judges, administrators and justice actors need to understand and implement disability centered justice practices.

Status of implementation in Nepal

A report published by National Planning Commission (NPC) does not mention disability at all throughout the document [\[2\]](#). Civil Society Organizations (CSO) have taken some initiatives but inclusion of disability in those initiatives is also not reflected significantly. In the past it has been realized that people with disabilities were not taken as important stakeholders in “Education for All” and Health for All” and people with disabilities were often not included in “ALL”. All state and non state actors should make sure that people with disability are not left behind when talking about “Leaving No one Behind”.

Conclusion

The SDG is a milestone documents lobbying for inclusive development worldwide and it's expected to achieve these goals, targets and indicators by 2030. It's not only a document of imaginary prospective but also strong provisions to its time to time review and follow in different level. As long as we are enchanting about inclusive development, participation of the Persons with disability in all level of its implementation to be ensured and the PDWs and self-help organization also need to vigilant. The progress and achievement of sustainable development goal to be accounted time to time and major findings of these progress to be disseminated to the concerned stakeholders. The goals need to review and follow-up in international, regional and national level. The governments and concerned stakeholders have to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and even in the local level. Likewise the review can be conducted in Regional/Sub-regional level. This is a key responsibility of the government to undertake peer learning, sharing of best practices and discussion of shared targets and cooperation amongst major stakeholders.

There is provision to have a High-level Political Forum (HLPF) undertakes the global follow-up and review of governments' implementation of the SDGs. In this regards at the national

level Participate in the global coordination mechanism established for persons with disabilities contribute to annual, thematic and national reviews and share knowledge, participate in peer review form and develop regional collaboration and projects at the regional level and prepare parallel and shadow reports, provide expert knowledge and engagement, participate in government-led consultations and build partnership with civil society, academia, stakeholders and UN agencies at the national level.

The SDG is milestone document to achieve sustainable development by 2030 and this is moreover a milestone for overall development of the persons with disabilities This is an opportunity to the right holders and the civil society organizations to consult and strengthen partnership in national, regional and international level and time to time update on progress and report any concerned issues.

About the author



Mr. Prakash Wagle, has Master degree in disability studies from the University College London and has long and proven working experience in the field of disability rights promotion and Community Based Rehabilitation in Nepal (CBR) as the trainers, researcher, disability rights activists, manager, advisor and so on. He started his career in CBR from Nepal Disabled Association (NDA) in 1991. Later on he moved to International Nepal Fellowship (INF) in 1999 where he served in various key positions. The author is one of the founders of CBR National Network and has been active in promoting CBR and disability rights through Networking. He is also Nepal's Country Representative for CBR Asia Pacific Network and member of global disability watch group. Currently working with CBM as the country coordinator of Nepal, Mr. Wagle is well known resource person for providing training in different aspect of disability rights, CBR and Social Inclusion.

[1] *People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty)*

[2] Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030 National (Preliminary) Report, National Planning Commission, 2015